196. Responsible Government.

MR. P. K. KURIAKOSE, (*Muvattupuzha taluk*) said that man was endowed with a desire for progress and improvement and that this craving for progress was universally observed in the matter of administration also. The old forms of Government were giving way to more liberal and popular forms of responsible Government. Within the last half a century, the benign Sovereigns of the State had established some representative institutions with a view to the progressive realisation of responsible Government in due course. But these institutions had not grown up with the times in conformity with the wishes of the people.

One of such institutions was the Sri Mulam Popular Assembly which was started 27 years ago. At present it was only an advisory body which expressed the needs and grievances of the people of different localities and belonging to various communities. Its constitution had to be thoroughly overhauled, to have the desired effect. The other institution, *viz.*, the Legislative Council deserved greater attention. At present it was merely a scene of tug of-war cetween the officials and the non-officials. The policy of the Government in the matters of excise, education, agriculture, rural reconstruction, recruitment to public service, etc., collided with the advanced views of the people, voiced forth by their representatives in the Council. The motions and resolutions discussed in the Council with the object of changing the viewpoint of the Government in these matters were either defeated, or if passed, were not carried out by the Government. This deplorable state of affairs could be remedied only by the establishment of responsible Government.

Further, a radical change would take place in the administration of British India and probably the Travancore Government would have to be a partner in the Federal India, as mentioned in the Dewan's Opening Address. Hence it was necessary to use the present opportunity to improve the constitution of the Government machinery before the State became a part of the All-India Federation. The first drawback that had to be remedied was the inadequate repersentation of the people in the Legislative Council. Before the adoption of responsible Government, all classes and interests should be properly and adequately represented in the Legislative Council. The present number of 35 non-officials was too small to represent the 50 lakhs of people of the State. The number of non-official members should be raised at least to fifty. The number of voters according to the last electoral rolls was 140,331. This was too small a number for a population of over five millions. The property qualification of voters should be lowered to have on the rolls at least 25 per cent. of the population. To achieve this, universal adult suffrage should be allowed in all the constituencies. Special constituencies should be created for the benefit of minority communities. The present system of nomination should be abolished. From the Legislative Council thus reconstituted, five members must be elected to form an Executive Council or a Cabinet, fully responsible to the Legislature and the Administration of the country should be

vested in that body. Without universal adult sufferage, a wider distribution of the general constituencies and the creation of special electorates for the minority communities, the introduction of responsible Government in the State would do more harm than good. The above administrative reforms should be introduced in the immediate future to secure for Travancore full recognition of her just and legitimate claims to an honourable place in the Federal India.

DEWAN'S REPLY: Mr. Kuriakose and other gentlemen who have made the representations on the general question of reform of the Assembly and the administration of the State, several opinions have been ventilated here on these subjects by the members who spoke on them. But one thing is clear from all those speeches and from the proceedings of this Assembly at this session also, and, that is that nobody will venture to say that this Assembly has not been very useful in effecting improvements in the administration generally, and in the working of the several departments of the State and in the various directions in which the interests of the people could be advanced. That is a piece of work for which the Assembly can justly take credit. By the Assembly, I do not mean the Assembly in its past sessions, but the Assembly as it has existed up to the present day, including the present session. Suggestions have been made in the course of the speeches for changes in the administration and in the constitution of the representative assemblies now in existence in the State. Some of those suggestions advocate fundamental and radical changes in them. Some others have recognised the difficulties in the way of such radical changes being made at once and have suggested reforms which could be carried out even under the constitution as it is at present. Some members—chief among them, I might mention Mr. Vasudevan Pillai of Changanacherry—suggested certain directions in which, even under the present rules and laws governing the working of the Assembly and other popular institutions here, there are possibilities of expansion. Those possibilities, the Government, I may give you the assurance, will explore and avail of to the utmost extent. References were made to certain statements made by my predecessor at the 25th session of the Assembly and by myself at the last session, in reply to suggestions and speeches similar to those that were made in this session. Generally, with regard to fundamental changes in the constitution, those statements cannot be added to usefully. In other directions, Government will be prepared to take action.

As regards the various suggestions made by different members for immediate reforms in administrative methods, the Government are very grateful to them for those suggestions. Criticisms from the representatives of the people, you need never fear, will be either misunderstood or ignored by the Government. As a matter of fact, several instances must have come to your own notice where such criticism has been taken advantage of by the Government for making necessary changes and introducing necessary reforms. That spirit of criticism was seen in this session of the Assembly also; and that spirit, I, on behalf of

Government, welcome, though in some cases, as is natural with an Assembly of this kind, the criticisms were such as might be deemed hyper-criticisms. But that is merely a secondary matter. The exhibition of the critical spirit by the people is itself an indication that the people and the Government are ever ready to co-operate. In that spirit of co-operation, I know the criticisms have been made and the suggestions put forward; and in the same spirit of co-operation, you may rest assured, the criticisms will be considered and the suggestions as far as possible accepted and carried out by the Government.

Ladies and gentlemen, I must here express the warm appreciation of the Government of the very thoughtful, sober and moderate way in which you the members of this Assembly have enabled the proceedings to be conducted. I shall have great pleasure in conveying to Her Highness the Maha Rani Regent the expression of devout loyalty to Her Highness and the throne which has uniformly emanated from the members of this Assembly. I thank you all.

MR. S. A. HARIHARAKRISHNA IYER: Sir, it gives me very great pleasure to speak a few words before we disperse. On behalf of the members of the 27th session of the Sri Mulam Popular Assembly, I beg to tender their thanks for the warm welcome accorded to them and for the manner in which you have conducted the proceedings of the Assembly. The institution, which was started by His Highness the late Sree Mulam Thirunal of revered memory, has its advantages and is too precious to be parted with. This session is very important in that you, a son of the soil, presided over it when it was visited with great pleasure by a former Dewan of the State who has just returned from the Round Table Conference. There has been a constitutional change in the body of the Assembly, which has enabled our lady members to adorn it. In this connection, it will not be out of place if I say with pleasure that our lady members have justified their presence in the body by the very able representations they have made here for the first time. In conclusion, Sir, I request you to be good enough to convey to His Gracious Highness the Maha Raja and to Her Gracious Highness the Maha Rani Regent our deep devotion and loyalty and our fervent prayers for their welfare. Thanking you once again, we disperse.

MR. NARAYANAN KOCHUPILLAI KAIMAL: ബഹുമാന്യനായ അദ്ധ്യക്ഷൻ അവർകൾക്കും അദ്ദേഹത്തെ പുറകി വലയംചെയ്യുനില്ക്കുന്ന ഡിപ്പാർട്ടുമെൻറു മേലദ്ധ്യക്ഷന്മാർക്കും, പത്രപ്രതിനിധികൾക്കും പ്രജാസഭാ അംഗങ്ങളുടെ പ്രതിനിധി എന്ന നിലയിൽ ഞാൻ സവിനയം വന്ദനം പറഞ്ഞുകൊള്ളുന്നു. ഞങ്ങൾ ഇരുപതു ദിവസമായി രാജ്യത്തിൻെറ നാനാഭാഗങ്ങളിൽ നിന്നും ഇവിടെ വന്നുതാമസിച്ച് ഞങ്ങളുടെ ആവശ്യങ്ങളേയും അഭിപ്രായങ്ങളേയും പറഞ്ഞതു് അവിടന്നു് ക്ഷമയോടുകൂടി കേട്ടിരുന്നു് ന്യായമായും യുക്തിയായുമുള്ള നാനാവിധമായ മറുപടികൊണ്ടു് ഞങ്ങളെ സന്തുഷ്ടചിത്തന്മാരാക്കിതീർത്തു. അവിടത്തെ

ആജ്ഞാനസരണമാണെങ്കിലും ഞങ്ങളെ സ്നേഹത്തോടുകൂടി, അവിടത്തെ വലയം ചെയ്തു നില്ക്കുന്ന ഡിപ്പാർട്ടുമെൻറു മേലദ്ധ്യക്ഷന്മാർ, യാത്ര പറയുന്നതിനു ഇടയാക്കിയ അങ്ങേയ്ക്കു സകലവിധമായ ശ്രേയസ്സും ഈ സഭയ്ക്കുമേൽക്കുമേൽ അഭ്യുദയവും ഉണ്ടാകുന്നതിനു ജഗദീശ്വരൻ കടാക്ഷിക്കട്ടെ.

DEWAN: I thank you once again for the warm appreciation of my efforts as representative of Her Highness the Maha Rani Regent at this session of the Assembly. On behalf of myself and the officers of Government who are also present here, I thank you all sincerely for the kind words which on your behalf Mr. Hariharakrishna Iyer and Mr. Kaimal have spoken. When I replied to the representations made by our sisters here, I had the privilege of telling them how highly I appreciated the way in which they put forward their case. I am glad that, as representative in that particular matter of the male members of the Assembly, Mr. Hariharakrishna Iyer expressed the appreciation of those members also. I have great pleasure in associating myself with these sentiments. Thanking you once again, I close this session.

The Assembly was prorogued at 3. 45 P. M.